

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!



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School bus union stops Boston layoffs

Labor-community solidarity leads to victory

By Frank Neisser
Boston

At a time when millions are laid off and unemployed throughout the country during the worst economic crisis since the depression of the 1930s, the Boston School Bus Union—Steelworkers Local 8751—has succeeded in round one of a long fight to protect jobs and vital services to the communities the union serves.

On Aug. 25 when the union received the annual bus route schedule, it learned that the school bus company First Student and the Boston School Department planned to eliminate 46 jobs by creating unsafe speedup conditions just as the school year is set to begin. The attack came in last-minute information to the union about the planned fall runs provided just prior to the Aug. 27 “fall bid,” where drivers bid on runs for the fall based on seniority.

As soon as the union learned of the attack, which violates the union contract, it swung into action and notified all the drivers. Within a day they produced a bulletin, scheduled and organized an emergency membership meeting for the night before the bid, and met with community leaders to alert the parents and community of the attack on their rights. The union’s Web site carried up-to-the-minute bulletins on the struggle.

The union demanded an immediate high-level negotiating session with the company and the School Department at noon on Aug. 25 at Local 8751 union hall. They also let the School Department and the company know that unless the union contract violations were satisfactorily resolved, there would be no driver participation in the fall bid or transportation at the opening of school.

Five top School Department and company representatives came to the negotiations, including Boston Public Schools CEO Michael Goar, First Student Regional V.P. Robert Timilty, and BPS Director of Transportation Michael Hughes. They

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Boston School Bus Drivers Union USW Local 8751.

Major labor unions back jobs march in Pittsburgh

By LeiLani Dowell

Momentum is building for the National March for Jobs and Tent City from Sept. 20-25 that will confront the leading finance ministers and bankers of the world’s wealthiest nations who will be meeting in Pittsburgh for the G-20 Summit.

In a major development, both the Steelworkers union and the United Electrical union—the only two international unions with national headquarters in Pittsburgh—have endorsed the Sept. 20 March for Jobs.

The Steelworkers union, which originally only represented those working in the steel industry, has diversified through a series of mergers and now represents workers in other industries as well, including those in other metals and manufacturing, paper and forestry products, the chemical industry, health care, pharmacies and pharmaceuticals, public employees, mining, and energy and utilities.

UE, one of most radical unions in the country, calls itself “the rank and file union.” The union represents “some 35,000 workers in a wide variety of man-

ufacturing, public sector and private non-profit sector jobs.” (ueunion.org)

No to a jobless recovery

Bail Out the People Movement activists, along with others mobilizing for the Global Week in Solidarity with the Unemployed, note that G-20 summit participants will be meeting from Sept. 24-25 to discuss plans to protect their interests during the economic crisis—but not those of the working people throughout the world who are affected the most by this crisis.

While the March and Tent City will address multiple concerns—including U.S. imperialist wars, health care, foreclosures and evictions, political prisoners and more—the principal issue will be the need for a serious jobs program. Organizers wish to carry on the legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., whose final struggle in the days before he was assassinated was the fight for jobs at a living wage.

The March for Jobs will assemble at 2 p.m. at Monument Baptist Church, located in the Hill, an historic African-American community adjacent to downtown Pittsburgh. Marchers will return to the Tent City, located in a lot next to the church and dedicated to the unemployed people of the world.

Both events will demand the rejection that a jobless recovery should be accepted or tolerable. BOPM organizer Larry Holmes told WW, “We must not accept a recovery only for Wall Street—a recovery for profits, but a jobless recovery.”

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The Mellons

Making people miserable with aluminum

By Stephen Millies

In 2007 Alcoa's top boss, Alain Belda, got \$25,646,420—nearly a half-million dollars a week. That year the aluminum giant racked up \$2.8 billion in profits.

In 2005 workers at Alcoa's plants in Honduras were making between 68 to 87 cents per hour, according to the International Metalworkers Federation. Alcoa fired all its workers in Honduras when the automotive market plunged in 2008.

In 2001 base pay for the 15,600 Alcoa workers assembling automotive electrical systems in Mexico was \$1.20 per hour. Alcoa provoked a work action in Mexico and fired 236 workers. It even sued nine union leaders for \$1 million.

This fantastic exploitation of human beings is called imperialism. It's why people are coming to Pittsburgh in late September to protest the G-20 summit, a gathering of treasury officials and bankers from 20 countries who are plotting how to protect their profits. A National March for Jobs will be held on Sept. 20, which will be followed by a Global Week in Solidarity with the Unemployed.

A 50-year monopoly

Alcoa was founded by the super-rich Mellon family as the Pittsburgh Reduction Company in 1888. Pittsburgh Reduction became the Aluminum Company of America in 1907 and then Alcoa in 1999.

Pittsburgh is also the home of the United Steelworkers union, which represents more than 15,000 Alcoa workers in the U.S. and Canada. The Steelworkers union has endorsed the Sept. 20 Jobs March in Pittsburgh, initiated by the Bail Out the People Movement.

Over the ages, people have learned to use copper, tin, iron and dozens of other metals. It took the Mellons to enforce a 50-year monopoly on aluminum in the United States. They controlled the patents of Charles Hall, who found out how to get alumina from bauxite—aluminum ore—at the same time French inventor Paul Heroult did.

The Cowles brothers, owners of the Electric Smelting & Aluminum Company in Lockport, N.Y., contested Hall's patent. The brothers claimed that Hall got his ideas from their similar efforts.

But they lost a court battle when federal Judge William Howard Taft ruled for the Pittsburgh Reduction Company and its patents in 1894. Author Harvey O'Connor estimates that Taft's decision was worth \$100 million to the Mellons.

It was a smart decision for Taft, who became a U.S. president and chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Taft also served as U.S. Governor-General of the Philippines when hundreds of thousands of Filipinos were massacred.

The Mellons responded to Taft's decree by jacking up the price of aluminum. After their patents expired, the Mellons used high tariffs to maintain their aluminum monopoly inside the United States. It didn't hurt that Andrew Mellon was treasury secretary from 1921 to 1932. They also grabbed every bauxite mine.

Prices were kept so high that even Henry Ford complained that he couldn't afford to use aluminum in his cars. Despite an antitrust suit filed in 1937, Alcoa still

controlled 100 percent of all aluminum smelting in the United States as World War II began. They even made half of the country's aluminum kitchen utensils.

"If America loses this war," said Interior Secretary Harold Ickes on June 26, 1941, "it can thank the Aluminum Corporation of America."

The emerging military-industrial complex was forced to break Alcoa's total monopoly just to get enough aluminum to build planes. A federal court in 1950 carved up production capacity, with Alcoa getting 51 percent, Reynolds 31 percent and Kaiser 18 percent.

Worldwide plunder & strikebreaking in the U.S.

Alcoa also spread misery around the world. Pollutants from the company's plants in Massena, N.Y., and other industries on the St. Lawrence River have poisoned fish caught downstream by the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne.

Alcoa came to Suriname, then a Dutch colony, in 1916. During World War II, 75 percent of U.S. bauxite imports came from Suriname. In 1963 Alcoa flooded 600 square miles of Surinamese land when the Afobaka Dam was built. Six thousand Maroons, descendants of escaped enslaved Africans, were driven out; each was given \$3 in compensation.

Alcoa imposed draconian trade policies on other countries as well. Jamaica got only 12 cents per ton for its bauxite. When Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley imposed a 7.5 percent levy on the selling price of alumina in 1972, Jamaica's bauxite revenues increased nine-fold in seven years.

Alcoa retaliated, and Jamaica's percentage of world bauxite production fell from 27 percent in 1970 to 17 percent in 1975. Production was shifted to Guinea and Australia.

In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, first prime minister and then president of the country, planned to industrialize Ghana by harnessing the Volta River. The plan was thwarted by Alcoa. And in 1966 the company's friends at the CIA overthrew Nkrumah.

Alcoa was also one of the biggest beneficiaries of the 1965 coup in Indonesia, in which a million people were killed.

The company also brutalized U.S. workers. The New York National Guard broke a 1915 strike at Alcoa's Massena works and bayoneted strike leader Joseph Solunski to death. In appreciation, Alcoa plant manager Charles Moritz tried to give each guardsman a set of aluminum cooking utensils.

In 1917 an Alcoa subsidiary sparked the race riots in East St. Louis, Ill., in which at least 125 African Americans were murdered.

Workers at Alcoa, Tennessee went on strike in 1934 and 1937, where two strikers were killed. This company town had a segregated neighborhood for Black people.

Only in 1941 were many of Alcoa's plants organized. The Steelworkers won recognition at the Cressona, Penn., plant in October 2008.

Sources: "Mellon's Millions" by Harvey O'Connor; "Alcoa's High Tech Sweatshop in Mexico" by Charles Kernaghan, published by the National Labor Committee. Next: Mellon's million-dollar lie machine.

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Jobless recovery: Only remedy is workers’ struggle

By Fred Goldstein

Guess what? There is a slight rise in some corporate profits. The corporations and biggest banks are doing a bit better. So the experts see a “recovery.” No big surprise, however.

The government gave the banks and the auto industry trillions of dollars in bailout money. No wonder they are doing somewhat better.

If Washington gave \$1.2 trillion in cash to a genuine workers’ jobs program, instead of giving it to AIG, Citigroup, Bank of America, Wells Fargo and the rest of the robber barons, the 30 million workers now unemployed or underemployed would be doing a whole lot better too.

If the government spent \$10 or \$12 trillion to buy up the workers’ unpayable debts and guaranteed their loans, the way they have done for Wall Street, workers would still be exploited and underpaid, but things would not be quite so bad.

Instead there are 30 million workers either unemployed or underemployed, with depression-level rates of joblessness in the African-American and Latino/a communities, and things are getting worse for them and their families, not better.

1,000 apply for 30 jobs

A taste of how hard it is for workers to find jobs, especially African-American workers, was revealed in a story about unemployment in Uniontown, Ala., whose surrounding Perry County is very poor and almost 70 percent Black. Uniontown had been paid \$3 million to dump thousands of tons of ash that spilled at a site in eastern Tennessee last December.

An announcement said the deal would create 30 jobs in a county whose unemployment rate was 17 percent. Arrowhead Landfill stopped taking applications after 1,000 were submitted (New York Times, Aug. 29).

The situation in Perry County is much like the situation in Michigan, Ohio, Rhode Island, California, North Carolina, Nevada and counties and cities throughout the U.S. One conservative estimate is that for the country as a whole there are six unemployed workers for every job opening, and things are getting worse.

Boosting profits by cutting jobs

It is the mass shedding of workers by the capitalists that is behind the slight and temporary upturn in business profits, not renewed business activity.

“The market barreled ahead this summer and is hovering near its high for the year,” wrote the Wall Street Journal on Aug. 31, “fueled in large part by stronger-than-expected second-quarter earnings. But the significant driver of the good news was cost cutting. Many companies had disappointing sales.”

The bosses are staring a contradiction in the face: “You cannot simply cut costs forever to have sustainable earnings,” said a strategist at Zack Investment Research. “You need revenues to grow [profits] over time.”

The bosses rely on sales to make their profits. They make their money from workers’ sweat and blood by selling what the workers produce. But to boost profits, bosses have cut wages, trimmed the labor force, cut hours and reduced benefits. As each company tries to maximize its profits by cutting labor, this trend inevitably deepens and widens poverty and hardship.

“Cost cutting” is a code word for layoffs, pay freezes, pay cuts and forced furloughs or cuts in hours. Fearing low sales, bosses also shrink inventories, which results in lower orders. In turn, lower orders mean more unemployment or underemployment.

Foreclosures up, tent cities spread

Despite talk of recovery and revival of the housing market, foreclosures are on the rise and getting worse as the unemployment crisis deepens. There were 360,000 foreclosures in July, a 7 percent increase over June and 32 percent above the year before. A record 13.6 percent of households are either in foreclosure or behind in their mortgage payments. More and more foreclosures are on prime mortgages of workers who have lost their jobs.

As workers lose their jobs, homelessness and tent cities are sprouting up around the country. Fearing mass rebellion, many municipalities are moving to legalize tent cities around the country. Examples are Nashville, Tenn.; Ontario (near Los Angeles), Ventura and Sacramento in California; Lacy, Wash.; and Champaign, Ill. These are among the many localities either providing services to the homeless or allowing charitable institutions to do so.

New York City and Seattle, on the other hand, have moved sharply to repress the growing homeless movement.

In Nashville, on any given night there are 4,000 homeless people, according to city authorities, and 785 shelter beds. There are now at least 30 known tent encampments in Nashville.

David Olson, 47 years old, is typical of the new homeless population. He and his spouse wound up living under a Nashville overpass after he lost his job making cement pipes in Iowa. They came to Nashville for a construction job that did not exist. “I’ve got five years experience in carpentry and 10 years roofing and I can’t find a job.” (Wall Street Journal, Aug. 11) The city and nonprofit organizations found housing for 25 people. David Olson was not one of them.

This is the answer of the richest capitalist country in the world to homelessness. It lets the evicted masses live in tents instead of providing housing, which should be a fundamental right of all people.

Unemployment leads to failed mortgages. It is a measure of the remaining real estate crisis and the excessive debt of all types that 84 banks have already failed this year. Furthermore, there are 416 banks, with assets of \$299 billion, on the

list of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in danger of failing. The FDIC has only \$10 billion left in its fund to deal with insolvent banks.

Instead of coming to the aid of the foreclosed, enabling them to pay their mortgages, which would keep the banks solvent, the FDIC has spent \$40 billion taking over insolvent banks and merging many of them with other banks.

The FDIC has created “loss shares” in which they let stronger banks take over the weak ones and guarantee from 80 percent to up to 95 percent of potential losses on bad real estate loans. It would be the most direct and efficient measure to use the tens of billions of dollars to guarantee homeowners’ mortgage payments, keep them in their homes, keep home prices from falling and keep neighborhoods from deteriorating. But the FDIC is manipulating the process to let banking sharks get stronger by devouring the weaker banks.

‘The mother of all jobless recoveries’

As far as the working class is concerned, underlying the entire economic crisis is the crisis of unemployment. It is becoming clearer and clearer that the capitalist system, in its present state of development, cannot solve the growing crisis of mass, long-term unemployment.

An Associated Press story on Aug. 24 reported: “So many jobs have been lost—nearly seven million since the recession began in December 2007—that the unemployment rate will remain high long after the economy begins to rebound.

“Many out-of-work Americans have lost unemployment insurance and severance benefits and are depleting their savings. Others are saving more and spending less, still shaken from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.”

The dispatch cited Alan Sinai, a highly respected bourgeois economic analyst: “This is going to be the mother of all jobless recoveries,” he said.

The vast majority of layoffs during the present crisis have been permanent layoffs. This means that of the seven million jobs destroyed so far, most will not return. The average household debt is near \$10,000. Unemployment rises steadily. Wages and benefits are going down. Personal bankruptcies are going up.

Profit-hungry health insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies and for-profit hospitals are eroding the health care benefits of the 250 million people who are covered. The number of people without health insurance is rising steadily

with the growth of unemployment and is now approaching 50 million.

All in all there are no prospects for any real capitalist revival—the kind where workers go back to work; where the stress and insecurity imposed by fear of layoffs and plant closings and the endless demands for concessions ceases; where wages are brought up to a level to support a decent living; and where jobs are secure.

The average annual wage of 80 percent of the working class is now down to \$33,000 a year—about one-and-a-half times the official poverty level (Business Week, Aug. 27). If there is no resistance as workers are forced to compete with each other more and more for jobs, wages decrease, unions are weakened, and the collective strength of the working class is eroded.

Independent united class struggle the only way

The only way to overcome this crisis is for the working class and all the oppressed to unite in struggle. The time of waiting for the Democratic Party leadership to reverse the fortunes of the workers must be ended. The time of waiting for capitalism to revive itself and bring back boom times is over.

The labor movement must unite with the communities; the organized must unite with the unorganized; the employed must unite with the unemployed. U.S.-born workers must unite with immigrants, including the undocumented. White workers must reject racism and division. This is the only way to build the kind of mighty movement to turn things around.

This is precisely the goal of the Bail Out the People Movement and dozens of sponsoring organizations that are building a mass March for Jobs in Pittsburgh on Sept. 20 to protest the gathering of the G-20—the twenty rich governments that are coming together to try to bolster the profit system that bleeds the workers of the world.

There will be a fighting Tent City in solidarity with the unemployed starting on the weekend of Sept. 19-20 and culminating in a March for Jobs on Sept. 20.

The good news is that as August ended the Steelworkers union and the United Electrical union, both of which have their national headquarters in Pittsburgh, have formally endorsed the March for Jobs, which is also already gathering support in Pittsburgh’s African-American community.

Be there. Declare that a job or income is a right. If you have a job, fight to keep it. If you don’t have a job, fight to get one! □

“Low-Wage Capitalism by Fred Goldstein is a most timely and important work, as the working class prepares for a “fightback” during the greatest crisis of capitalism since the Great Depression.”

– **Clarence Thomas**, ILWU Local 10 & Co-chair, Million Worker March Movement

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– **Martha Grevatt**, founding board member (1994) and National Executive Officer (1996-2001), Pride At Work, AFL-CIO, Executive Board member UAW Local 122

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Thousands voice opposition at public hearings

Mass outrage stops Detroit bus

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

After mass outrage throughout Detroit, the corporate-backed administration of Mayor Dave Bing has suspended plans to make large-scale cuts in public transportation. Several thousand workers, youth, people with disabilities and seniors attended a series of eight public hearings held Aug. 24-27 on the proposed cuts in bus services. Two hearings, sponsored by the Detroit Department of Transportation, were held each day at various locations throughout the city.

The hearings were attended by angry workers who said they would lose their jobs if the transportation cuts were enacted. DDOT plans included proposals to extend wait times, the elimination of at least four routes, the discontinuation of service on certain routes between midnight and 5 a.m., and the suspension of all service on Saturday from 6 p.m. until 5 a.m. on Monday.

It is estimated that 40 percent of Detroit's population depends upon buses to get back and forth to work, schools, markets, retail outlets, churches, mosques, medical clinics, hospitals, visits to family and friends, as well as social activities.

Over the last several weeks the Bing administration has said the city is facing a \$300 million deficit. The administration's program to address the shortfall is to lay off 1,000 city workers, trim benefits for public employees, slash services for residents, including the much-needed bus service, and at the same time escalate police operations aimed at unemployed workers and youth.

The Detroit Free Press reported on August 30 that "Detroit began its fiscal year [July 1] with less than \$20 million in the bank—not even enough of a surplus to pay the roughly 13,000 employees who cost the city \$50 million a month in salaries and

benefits." Bing, a former Detroit Pistons basketball star and later businessman who owns a steel corporation on the city's east side, is allowing the bond rating agencies, banks and corporations to dictate the terms of how the deficit should be addressed.

Public transportation and city workers targeted

Rather than maintaining bus service, the banks and corporations are demanding that workers and riders bear the brunt of layoffs and cuts so that the financial sector can be paid extortionate interest rates on loans and municipal bonds.

A document issued by DDOT at the public hearings stressed that "The economic downturn faced by the nation is a contributing factor, but there are other factors that have affected the services that are provided to public transit users." It then cited revenue shortfalls, the city budget deficit, a decrease in state transportation funding, no dedicated funding source for public transportation, the restrictions placed on federal transportation dollars and higher operating costs as key factors in the crisis facing Detroit.

Despite all the reasons given for cutting bus service, the thousands who rallied and testified at the public hearings were not accepting the city's proposals as legitimate or warranted. People pointed to the fact that banks and corporations have been bailed out to the tune of trillions of dollars. They asked where the economic recovery funds were that were supposed to be sent to the state and the city by the Obama administration.

By the second day of the hearings, it became quite obvious there would be political repercussions if bus service were cut. Bing is running for reelection in November for a four-year term. His opponent, Tom Barrow, made appearances at the hearings and was cheered by the people there. Yet most workers realize that Barrow, who is also a businessman,

does not offer a real alternative to the current crisis.

Where the money really goes

According to the corporate-owned media, the wages and benefits won by city workers and school employees as a result of years of protracted struggles are the underlying causes for the economic crisis facing Detroit. Such arguments could not be further from the truth. Detroit has suffered immensely as a result of the economic policies carried out by the ruling class and the U.S. government. Even the corporate media admit that the proposed cuts by the city administration would yield savings of less than \$10 million.

Trillions of tax dollars and Federal Reserve credit lines have been extended to the banks, corporations and insurance companies since 2008. The ongoing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Colombia, Somalia and other regions have cost the working class additional trillions in public money. But the media make no mention of these factors.

The corporate press, which are backing the Bing administration, are constantly holding the threat of bankruptcy and receivership over the workers. They are telling the unions every day that if they do not accept broad concessions and layoffs, the city will become insolvent.

In the Aug. 30 Detroit Free Press, this ruling-class media put forward its only "possible remedies" to the crisis. According to the newspaper, "Detroit's financial options remain limited, experts say. Two options are bankruptcy with a receiver being in charge, and having the state appoint an emergency financial manager."

The "emergency financial manager," appointed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm, would be tasked with solving the financial crisis. The appointee would be mandated to renegotiate union contracts. With state approval the manager could force the city into bankruptcy.

In bankruptcy, a judge typically appoints a receiver who acts under the guidelines of federal bankruptcy law. The receiver would be tasked with preserving private property during the bankruptcy period. Union contracts can be abrogated during bankruptcy in favor of the creditors and the city administration.

Even though the Bing administration was forced to back away from public transportation cuts, 205 workers received pink slips on Aug. 28. The administration refused to say in which departments the workers would be laid off.

The Detroit Board of Education, in an effort to avoid a strike, extended the existing contract until the end of October. At least 2,000 teachers and school employees have been threatened with layoffs.

Meanwhile, the unemployment rate for the city of Detroit is now officially 29.4 percent. But this number does not reflect the growing ranks of discouraged workers who see no prospects for finding employ-

On The

Boycott TV4 in D.C. area

What do you call it if a company announces it's going to take a union job that workers have been doing for decades and simply change the job title so it's—abracadabra!—a nonunion job? An illegal dirty trick! That's exactly why 2,500 broadcast workers at NBC Universal in Burbank, Calif.; Chicago; New York; and Washington, D.C., voted to strike by a large margin on July 14. The company also plans to close some operations in New York City and Burbank and transfer the work to a nonunion facility in New Jersey. The last bargaining session was in May, reports the Broadcast Employees and Technical union (NABET-CWA), and the contract expired March 31. Local 31 in the D.C. area is urging area union members and activists to sign cards pledging to "Turn Off NBC4!" For cards, contact Local 31 negotiator Rick McDermott at rcki@msn.com or 202-841-6392. (Union City, Metro Washington Council AFL-CIO, Aug. 6)

Support Rite Aid workers

It is against the law for a company not to negotiate a contract when the workers vote to be represented by a union. But it often takes a long, hard struggle to get a company to obey the law. Take Rite Aid, for example. Even though the giant drugstore chain thought its warehouse workers in Lancaster, Calif., would buy an intimidation campaign carried out by a high-priced union-busting firm, the workers defied the bosses and voted to join the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in March 2008. Now Rite Aid has hired another anti-union firm to try to decertify the union instead of negotiating a contract. To pressure Rite Aid to obey the law, sign the petition to Rite Aid's CEO at www.unionvoice.org/campaign/riteaid.

Bloomberg charged in bias suit

New York City's billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg, may no longer run the giant media company he founded, but as its majority shareholder he continues to be briefed on its activities. That's

NUMMI auto workers demand: 'SAVE OUR JOBS!'

By Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

"There ain't no power like NUMMI power, cuz NUMMI power won't stop!" could be heard for blocks in downtown San Francisco when several hundred autoworkers from the Fremont New United Motor Manufacturing Inc. (NUMMI) plant picketed the offices of Senator Dianne Feinstein on Aug. 29. The workers have been protesting recent actions by General Motors and Toyota that will lead to the closure of the NUMMI plant by March 2010.

NUMMI was a joint venture between GM and Toyota. GM closed the plant in 1982, then opened it up two years later with the Japanese automaker's assistance. The current job crisis for the 4,700 members of United Auto Workers Local 2244, Region 5, began last June when GM, currently in bankruptcy proceedings, withdrew from its partnership with Toyota.

On Aug. 28 Toyota officially announced that it will end all production of cars at the NUMMI plant in March 2010. Toyota cited the GM bankruptcy and withdrawal as the reason for its decision to move production elsewhere.

The community and autoworkers who will be directly affected are fighting



Sergio U. Santos of UAW Local 2244 chairs Aug. 29 rally.

WWW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

the protest. Tim Carlson, a spokesperson from the San Francisco Labor Council said, "On behalf of our more than 150 unions, we want to express our outrage over the planned closing of NUMMI."

Several speakers, including Ron Lopez, trustee of Local 2244, said they were determined to continue the fight to save NUMMI. Sergio U. Santos, president of the local, chaired the rally.

Demonstrators kept a loud and energetic picket going outside Senator Feinstein's office for over two hours. A statement by the Bail Out the People Movement was distributed expressing solidarity with the NUMMI workers and inviting them to attend the Sept. 20 National March for Jobs in Pittsburgh on the weekend before the Group of 20 meet there. □

against NUMMI's closing. The Aug. 29 demonstration was the second organized by Local 2244, and it attracted the attention of several legislators who attended. Statements were read from Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Lee expressing their concern for the more than 50,000 jobs that will be lost in the South Bay due to the pending NUMMI closure.

One of the first speakers, Alberto Torrico, majority leader of the California State Assembly, slammed the plant closing, calling for a government bailout of the NUMMI workers. "It's time to bail out the people, not the bankers and Wall Street executives," said Torrico.

Many UAW locals were represented at

cuts

ment in the city or underemployed workers who can only find part-time jobs.

Emergency measures needed

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs attended the public hearings on the proposed transportation cuts. Coalition members distributed thousands of flyers inviting the people to a mass organizing meeting on Sept. 12 at Central United Methodist Church in downtown Detroit. The meeting will declare an economic state of emergency and demand a halt to the use of working people as scapegoats in the current capitalist meltdown.

Members of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition are proposing further mass actions targeted at the financial district in downtown Detroit. The Coalition says the city should impose a moratorium on debt service payments to the banks until the financial crisis abates and allow city workers to maintain their jobs. □

Picket Line

By Sue Davis

why he had to give a deposition July 28 in a federal discrimination class-action lawsuit. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission brought the suit in September 2007 on behalf of 80 female employees who charge Bloomberg L.P. with systematic discrimination against pregnant women who took maternity leave. During the deposition the lawyer for two plaintiffs described Mayor Bloomberg “as more dismissive and uninterested than he was during his previous appearance, two months ago.” (New York Times, July 28) Does that mean Bloomberg could care less about the problems of working mothers—even the relatively privileged ones at his company? That would certainly be consistent with the restrictive rules on food stamps Bloomberg insisted on and the city’s policies on homeless families, both of which disproportionately affect poor women of color.

17,000 AT&T workers win contracts

About 9,000 workers represented by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and about 8,000 workers represented by the Communication Workers union successfully negotiated separate contracts with AT&T on Aug. 16 and Aug. 28, respectively. Both three-year contracts included wage increases. While health care coverage had been a sticking point, with the billion-dollar mega-corporation threatening to cut it altogether for retirees and to hike the percentage the workers pay, the unions were able to win continued retiree coverage and put a lid on the workers’ contribution. Another 65,000 workers represented by CWA districts in the East, Southeast and Southwest, who voted to strike on April 4, are still at the table.

Labor Day: Demand jobs

Organized labor will be marching in many cities to commemorate Labor Day. The top demand must be for jobs, jobs, jobs! That’s why it would be great for unionists and activists to leaflet marches all over the country with the call for the Sept. 20 March for Jobs in Pittsburgh before the G-20 meeting. To download flyers, visit bailoutpeople.org. □

Texas rally for immigrant rights



Members of the Alianza Mexicana.

Activists and neighborhood families gathered together in Northeast Houston on Aug. 29 to hold a powerful rally for immigrant rights despite a counterprotest by the right-wing Minutemen. Organized by La Raza Justice Movement, the rally included activists from around Texas, including Jose Orta from Taylor, Texas, an organizer against the T. Don Hutto Prison, which houses immigrant families seeking asylum.

Organizer and rally chair Hector Chavana Jr. commented after the rally ended: “The crowd was a good mix of active people from around the city and neighborhood residents. I know that we inspired many people, and we got many names of neigh-



Charhonda Williams, director of the Houston Peace and Justice Center; Hector Chavana, Jr., head of La Raza Justice Movement, and Jose Orta, organizer against the Hutto Prison.

bors, who we hope will continue in the struggle. Our speakers, poets and mariachis electrified the crowd and Los Minutemen backed down and left, and that was the end of that. In the end, we accomplished our goals.”

Supporting organizations included the Central American Resource Center, Alianza Mexicana por una Reforma Migratoria, several LULAC chapters, Museo Guadalupe Aztlan, and the Pacifica radio shows “Proyecto Latino Americano” and “Nuestra Palabra.”

—Report and photos by Gloria Rubac

‘The American Way’: No truth, no justice

By Dolores Cox

Editor’s note: This essay was written in response to the U.S. government’s denial of parole for Native-American political prisoner Leonard Peltier on Aug. 21.

There’s a comic strip character called Superman. His battle cry is “Truth, Justice and the American Way!” Unfortunately, however, “the American way” too often does not encompass the values of truth and justice.

The ugly truth about the United States is that it is a country that was founded on hatred, violence and lies. White supremacist ideology, capitalist greed and imperialist domination resulted in the theft of Indigenous peoples’ land, their displacement, enslavement, destruction of their culture and the massacre of millions of them. And white supremacist propaganda continues to drive the engine of the U.S. today, accounting for the high degree of bigotry, ignorance, apathy and indifference when it comes to the rights of Native Americans and all people of color.

There is no such thing as “liberty and justice for all” in the U.S. And there’s no such thing as color-blind justice. The judi-

cial system and its prison-industrial complex imprison mainly people of color. And the number of political prisoners is abominable. Institutional racism dictates that being born a person of color is punishable by a life sentence of discrimination, and declares that having the audacity to speak truth to power is also a punishable crime. Fighting social injustice and oppression is labeled criminal activity.

In keeping with “the American way,” if you’re a person of color you will continually have to fight for your liberation from the oppressor and for your civil and human rights. The oppressor does not tolerate resistance or dissent, peaceful or otherwise. And your right to self-defense and self-determination will repeatedly be undermined. The rhetoric about democracy is just that—it has never been actualized.

The FBI—notoriously known as the government entity responsible for heinous criminal acts against people of color—continues to reign supreme, undisciplined and unbridled. And framing freedom fighters is nothing new. The civil rights and Black Power movements were destroyed by the racist attacks on its leaders and activists by the FBI and its

Cointelpro operations.

Anyone speaking out and challenging the system is viewed as a threat to “the American way.” So they’re demonized and silenced through imprisonment, assassination or by any means the government deems necessary. On Native-American reservations the FBI has always had carte blanche. And the FBI had its way again at Leonard Peltier’s parole hearing

The U.S. government has committed unspeakable crimes against humanity on Native tribal nations, and the blood on the government’s hands still hasn’t dried. Living conditions on Indian reservations remain deplorable. And the devaluing of nonwhite life continues. Leonard Peltier will not be eligible for another parole hearing until the year 2024, at age 79. His two life sentences and denial of parole expose the truth of what the U.S. really stands for.

Of course, the U.S. leader of the so-called free world and his federal attorney general have the power to free Leonard Peltier, Mumia Abu-Jamal and other innocent political prisoners languishing in jails. But in keeping with “the American way” of life they’ve chosen not to give us the change we can believe in. □



GIs face Army’s repression, mass punishment

Free the Fort Bragg 50

By Dee Knight

The resistance of conscientious objector Dustin “Che” Stevens has sparked a national petition campaign to free Stevens and the 50-plus other GIs currently held in the 82nd Holdover Unit at Fort Bragg, N.C., awaiting absent without leave and desertion charges. The petition says these GIs “live in a legal limbo of poor living conditions, verbal abuse and arbitrary punishments while waiting for up to a year to be actually charged and brought before a court martial. The result is that these soldiers are subjected to many months of unjust and illegal punishment prior to their day in court.”

The petition requests that the Army “improve living conditions, reassign sadistic supervisors, end all informal punishments, and expedite resolution for these soldiers so that they can return home to begin rebuilding their lives as soon as pos-

sible.” It also requests that the time they spend in the Holdover Unit count as part of any sentence they might receive.

Signers include Mike Ferner, national president of Veterans for Peace; retired U.S. Army Colonel Ann Wright; Marjorie Cohn, president of the National Lawyers Guild; historian Howard Zinn; leaders of Iraq Veterans Against the War and Courage To Resist; organizers at GI coffee houses at Fort Hood and Fort Lewis; and many more. The petition is directed to the Fort Bragg Commanding General and the Commanding Officer of the 82nd Holdover Unit, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C. (To sign and contribute to this campaign, go to Couragetoresist.org.)

Conditions at Fort Bragg were exposed recently in articles by Courage To Resist project coordinator Sarah Lazare and Dahr Jamail, author of “The Will to Resist: Soldiers Who Refuse to Fight in Iraq and Afghanistan.” Their report, “Echo

Platoon—Warehousing Soldiers in the Homeland,” appeared in “Tom Dispatch” on Aug. 10. (It is online at Couragetoresist.org.)

According to the Echo Platoon report, soldiers who have gone AWOL and then voluntarily turned themselves in or were forcibly returned, “remain suspended in a legal limbo of forced uncertainty that can extend from several months to a year or more, while the military takes its time deciding their fate. Some of them, however, are offered a free pass out of this military half-life—but only if they agree to deploy to Afghanistan or Iraq.”

“Echo is like jail with some privileges,” says Spc. Kevin McCormick, 21. He was held there for more than seven months on AWOL and desertion charges, then offered release if he would accept deployment to Iraq—despite being suicidal.

“You’re less than human to the com-

Continued on page 8

‘Everyone and everything is protected’

Cuba excels in hurricane preparedness

By Gloria Rubac
Pinar del Río, Cuba

Like the Gulf Coast of the United States, the island nation of Cuba was hit hard by hurricanes Gustav and Ike in the fall of 2008.

However, in Cuba, no one, not a single person, was left to their own luck to survive the hurricanes.

“We are lucky to have a Revolution! It is a fact that nobody will be neglected,” wrote Fidel Castro in his “Reflections” on Aug. 28, 2008, before Gustav had yet hit Cuba. “Our strong, forceful and farsighted Civil Defense protects our people.”

Members of the 2009 Pastors for Peace Cuba Friendship Caravan, who traveled to Cuba from the U.S. this July, found out just how real that statement is.

One group of caravanistas spent four days in the most western Cuban province, Pinar del Río, which just 10 months earlier had been devastated by Gustav and Ike. Meeting with government and Communist Party officials in the provincial capital, we learned firsthand how Cuba prepares for a hurricane and how they recover from one.

Socialist planning, prevention

“Our major task is prevention. We protect our population and also the resources of our economy,” explained an official.

The province of Pinar del Río has a population of 731,000 people. During Gustav 164,000 people were evacuated and during Ike 192,000 people were evacuated. Everything was organized, well-planned and well-executed. Electricity was out for 20 days, but there were generators for businesses and for people.

“First, we begin before hurricane season is near. We study the population. We identify which of our people will need



WWW PHOTOS: GLORIA RUBAC

A hurricane-damaged home in Pinar del Río being rebuilt; school in Puerto Esperanza—From left: Rev. Lucius Walker, two of the teachers and caravanista Bill Hill who was part of the November 2008 reconstruction effort.

help. We know which areas will flood first. We have food and supplies ready.

“Second, if a hurricane is approaching and evacuation is necessary, we keep people informed using all media—television, radio and the press. We begin with those most needy, the elderly, families with small children, the sick. Students in boarding schools are immediately taken home. Those who have no one to take them in are taken to civil defense areas that are prepared to house them.

“Then we evaluate economic problems, such as livestock, crops and factories, and take precautions.

“When the hurricane hits us, everyone and everything is protected. Once the hurricane passes, recovery begins immediately.”

In a town in Pinar del Río, Puerto Esperanza, we visited a special school that had been brutally damaged by the hurricanes. Within weeks, Pastors for Peace had sent 30 volunteers to help the community rebuild Escuela Especial Santos Cruz; now it is 90 percent

complete. The school educates 76 children with mild to severe mental retardation.

Before the hurricane hit, all desks, books, school records and other supplies were stored in a bunker so they wouldn’t be ruined. After the hurricane students didn’t stop going to school, but met in homes. “Due to good planning, they didn’t miss a beat,” one of the teachers told us.

Puerto Esperanza is a village of 2,000 people on the coast. Historically, many people here have made a living by fishing. Today there is a fishing co-op of 160 workers. After the hurricanes there was a



lot of destruction, but today they have rebuilt and recovered from the storms.

The director of the co-op, Magaly Rodríguez Gómez, told us that no one lost their job after Gustav and Ike hit last year. Everyone was paid while the rebuilding was going on.

She explained that since the Cuban revolution there has been a 180-degree turn in the fishing industry.

“Before, the private fishermen wouldn’t pay regular salaries. After the season ended, the workers would lose their jobs. Now, we are paid year-round. After our boats were damaged from the hurricanes, we were still paid while we rebuilt our industry, and it is now 100 percent complete.”

On July 31, 130 caravan members joined with 140 members of the Venceremos Brigade in central Havana for an Anti-imperialist Tribune. One of the speakers was Irma González, daughter of political prisoner René González, one of the Cuban Five being imprisoned in the U.S.

González told the international audience of mostly North Americans: “We welcome you as our brothers and sisters. We take pride that we are never by ourselves. You visit our country in difficult times. You struggle against the blockade and you support our heroes, the Cuban Five.”

She continued, “The last few years of hurricanes have been difficult. Over a half a million homes were destroyed. We had over \$10 billion in damage. But nobody was forsaken in our country. We made huge efforts and no one lost their job. The most important thing ever is the life of every single human being in Cuba.” □

A hurricane-damaged home being repaired.

Katrina: Four years later

NYC program honors hurricane survivors

By Dolores Cox
New York

The New York Coalition in Solidarity with Hurricane Katrina-Rita Survivors sponsored a Katrina 4th anniversary event on Aug. 29 at the Solidarity Center. Gulf Coast survivors and their supporters reflected on the 2005 hurricanes and flood disaster.

The disaster is said to be the largest natural disaster in U.S. history. Broken levees in sections of New Orleans resulted in approximately 1,500 deaths. Thousands of survivors were displaced and scattered throughout the country.

The anniversary program included the survivors giving thanks for the help they’ve received from various community organizations, individuals, endorsers, labor unions, churches, college students and coalitions. A listing of all those acknowledged was handed out.

Some survivors emotionally recited poetry and spoken word they had composed, telling the story of their experiences during the hurricane and flooding. Others gave reflections on their traumatic ordeals and present circumstances, or gave commentary on the government’s neglect and indifference to their situation then and now. A pre-schooler softly sang the song “Jesus loves me.” And a trombonist played the New Orleans-style jazz tunes “When the Saints Go Marching In” and “Down by the Riverside.” The audi-

ence responded by clapping and singing along.

Special tributes were made to recently deceased Vicky White and Sen. Ted Kennedy. White was a New Jersey community activist, member of the Peoples Organization for Progress, and a dedicated fighter for justice who saw the struggle of New Orleans residents as everybody’s struggle. When she passed she was given a New Orleans-style funeral. The community is attempting to have a street in Highland Park, N.J., named after her. Sen. Kennedy was honored for his tireless fight on behalf of survivors.

Organizer and mentor of the NY Katrina-Rita coalition, Brenda Stokely, was also given special thanks and appreciation. One survivor jokingly commented that Stokely came out of the womb proclaiming “No justice, no peace!” The Nation of Islam was also recognized for its continuing support. NOI members brought backpacks stuffed with school supplies for survivors’ children, and gave a brief statement ending with the words “Still we rise!”

Transit Workers union representative Charles Jenkins connected the union’s fight for affordable housing with the survivors’ human rights struggle for housing and the right to return home. The union is raising transportation money for unemployed survivors to attend the Sept. 20 rally and march for jobs during the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh. A Picture the

Homeless member spoke on neo-liberalism, right-wing think tanks, co-opted politicians, and the need to shatter media stereotyping.

A video feed from New Orleans on the current state of affairs in the region was given by Bill Quigley, Center for Constitutional Rights legal director. Quigley stated that injustice still reigns, and people of color who remain in New Orleans still receive little support. Sixty percent of the people were renters or elderly home owners, and they received none of the \$10 billion allocated to repair homes. Twenty-seven thousand families are eligible for the government’s Road Home program, but have yet to receive the money. Monies are also unaccounted for.

The government is still pushing people out of hotels, shelters and housing assistance programs. The Department of Housing and Urban Development has demolished thousands of good public housing units. One-third of the houses are vacant, with some occupied by squatters. Homelessness is high, and rents have doubled or tripled. The population of New Orleans has been reduced to 300,000. And only about 10 percent (500 families) of renters will be able to return in the future. Meanwhile, the government has given land to private developers.

Quigley added that money has been given to large businesses and companies, while many public hospitals and schools remain closed. There is privatization of

hospitals and charter schools, with no programs for children with disabilities. Only half of Black and poor school kids are in schools. Day care, health and mental health care are also greatly reduced.

The French Quarter tourist area, just a short distance from the blighted Ninth Ward, is thriving. Despite high unemployment, Louisiana’s Republican governor has, for political reasons, refused the federal stimulus package money for unemployment compensation for 20,000 families, Quigley stated.

Regarding the levees, Quigley said there is no federal report that the city is any safer than before. And no progress has been made to ensure the disaster won’t be repeated. He concluded that Katrina exposed the country’s racial and class disparities. He stated the government has abandoned New Orleans, and there’s no real leadership by federal or state governments. However, Quigley emphasized, we will not forget or rest until the struggle is won.

During the program a complete meal, prepared by supporters and their friends, was served. The program ended with a solemn, candlelight remembrance that included honoring those who perished in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and calling out of ancestors’ names. There was the chant of “What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!” The closing sentiment expressed was: “The light of our struggle will never go out.” □



Bint Jbeil, weeks after Israeli bombardment in August 2006.

WW PHOTO: LEILANI DOWELL



Bint Jbeil, after reconstruction August 2009.

WW PHOTO: PAUL WILCOX

Eyewitness Lebanon: The South rebuilds

By Joyce Chediak & Paul Wilcox
Southern Lebanon

In the 2006 war, in retaliation for its failed invasion, Israel bombed virtually every one of Lebanon’s southern villages and towns. Roads and bridges were destroyed, with mosques and churches smashed and Red Cross ambulances, schools, government emergency centers, factories, power and water networks blown apart. And then, in the last days of the war, after getting a rush weapons’ delivery from the Pentagon, Israel dropped 1.2 million cluster bombs on the South.

Driving to the South three years later, our guides promised to take us to the areas that had been hardest hit. We did not know what to expect.

All afternoon we drove up and down the hills of southern Lebanon, through Al Abasia, Saddaqine, Yater. We saw no destruction or rubble, just a vast reconstruction effort. Village upon village was rebuilt or being rebuilt.

Up and down the rocky hills of Yater, Arayis, Tebrir, Ein Almerzreb, and Bourj al Moulouk, everywhere rebuilding was in full swing. The buildings were of all sizes and shapes. Large multifamily houses, new apartment buildings with balconies, everywhere new construction. The finished units had been painted in shades of gold, with balconies and trim in terra cotta. They were easily distinguishable from the weather-stained concrete of older buildings, of which there were few.

This huge reconstruction effort was in the parts of Lebanon administered by Hezbollah. This party and resistance movement based in Lebanon’s Shiite community promised the people that it would rebuild, and the people would return to their homes. The promise is being fulfilled.

U.S. shown up on the world stage

This stands in marked contrast to the U.S. government’s indifferent attitude toward rebuilding New Orleans. Today, that U.S. city’s Lower Ninth Ward “looks



WW PHOTO: JOYCE CHEDIAC

Father taking pictures of his sons on a captured Israeli tank at Khiam

like an oversized graveyard,” and its residents are scattered across the country. (New York Times, Aug. 31) But in southern Lebanon the new housing is going full steam ahead, and most of the residents of southern Lebanon have returned to their villages.

Can you imagine the enthusiasm here if the U.S. government had committed itself in the same way to rebuilding New Orleans? If it had said to the displaced, largely African-American and poor population: “We know you have suffered a disaster. Now we are committed to rebuilding your homes and helping you move back to resume your lives as if there had been no disaster.”

But this was not to be. Instead those in power said: “Too bad for you. You are refugees in your own land. Now we can build more expensive housing that you can never afford.” No wonder the U.S. government hates Hezbollah for showing up Washington on the world stage.

Our guides said the first year after the war had been especially hard, but Hezbollah had given each family \$12,000—a huge sum in Lebanon. Of that, \$2,000 was meant to cover rent for a year and \$10,000 for furniture. This money went not only to the poor Shiite families but to all families who lost their homes. For example, families in Marjayoun, a Christian village, were given the same funds for rebuilding.

We were told that money for rebuilding has come from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Syria. Iran gave significant support. Much later, our guides said, the Lebanese

government came up with some funds. Many people in Lebanon told us that the government siphoned off much of the money given for rebuilding. This money never made it to the people. In marked contrast, we heard again and again that Hezbollah was the only group that put money directly into the people’s hands.

Bint Jbeil: The invaders could not pass

Our guides took us to Maruna Ras, a small village up a steep, rocky incline close to the border with Israel. This is where the Israeli tanks and troops first crossed the border into Lebanon in 2006. The village fought back, but it was taken.

Next in Israel’s path was Bint Jbeil, a city of 45,000 and the main administrative center for the South. It was here that the resistance fighters stopped the Israeli ground advance in street-to-street battles. The people of Bint Jbeil stopped the invaders, who could not penetrate even a mile into Lebanon.

But Bint Jbeil suffered. Bombed by land, sea and air, 70 percent of the city was flattened. Here too there was no rubble, only new construction.

However, we did not just see reconstruction. In Bint Jbeil and in every village were pictures of the young men who died defending their homes and whose sacrifice provided the security in which to rebuild the South. No town was without its highly visible Martyrs pictures. Some lined the main road, a portrait on each pole. Others were clustered together, at intersections.

Many pictures, we were told, stood where these freedom fighters fell. Our guides knew their stories. The first to be killed was a teenager caught in a building that collapsed after a bombing. There was a portrait of Jawad Aila, a young man with light eyes, credited with taking out 16 Israeli tanks before he fell.

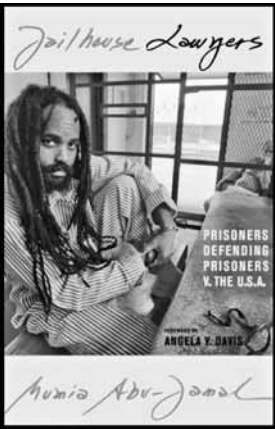
Khiam: twice taken back by the people

We arrived at Khiam. When Israel occupied southern Lebanon for 18 years, its puppet Lebanese army kept a prison at Khiam known for its torture of resistance fighters. But when Hezbollah and its allies liberated the South in 2000, the jail was turned into a monument to the people’s struggle.

In 2006 Israel’s very first bombings were of its former prison—to obliterate the people’s monument. Khiam is now rubble. But in the spirit of resilience, determination and pride we saw throughout southern Lebanon, the jail has once again been turned into a monument to resistance.

A few of the pre-2000 torture cells remain at Khiam. Also there are Israeli tanks and other vehicles taken out in 2006, along with resistance missiles and missile launchers. Khiam now testifies that the people of southern Lebanon kicked out Israeli invaders two times, and will do so again if they need to.

Twice taken back by the people, Khiam today is visited by Lebanese families who perch their children on the mangled remains of Israeli tanks and take their pictures. □



JAILHOUSE LAWYERS: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v. the U.S.A.

By Mumia
Abu-Jamal

Order at:
Leftbooks.com

Sickness & struggle

Radical movements create context for 1960s health care reform

By David Hoskins

The 1960s was a decade of worker mobilization, youth and student radicalization, and revolutionary struggle inside the United States and around the world. The 1959 Cuban revolution, on the eve of the new decade, was a sign of the struggles to come.

That revolution, incidentally, was accompanied by great advances in health care. The Cuban medical system has since developed into one of socialist medicine's greatest achievements.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was launched in China in 1966 with the support of Mao Zedong. The Cultural Revolution was the largest movement of revolutionary youth and students in world history. Its recognition of the need for continual revolution in all spheres of society—political, cultural and economic—sent chills down the spine of the ruling class, from Japan to Western Europe and the United States.

This is the same decade that the U.S. saw the development of the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Liberation Struggle, and the student-based anti-war movement to stop the U.S. war in Vietnam. These radical movements posed a challenge to national oppression, war and capitalism itself. As such, they forced elected politicians to pay attention to the

plight of poor and working people.

Voices such as those of Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Huey P. Newton captured the imagination of all those struggling under the weight of capitalist injustice, especially the nationally oppressed. In April 1963 King wrote from a rotting jail cell in Birmingham that “freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.” These leaders, and others like them, organized a movement to demand freedom through the churches, mosques, unions, campuses—anywhere the poor and dispossessed could be reached.

Michael Harrington's 1962 work, “The Other America: Poverty in the United States,” exposed the extreme poverty of that decade. Harrington estimated that at that time there were some 50 million poor people in this country. Harrington was a self-identified socialist, a former editor of The Catholic Worker and an organizational secretary for the Workers Defense League.

In his chapter entitled “The Invisible Land,” Harrington speaks to what he calls one of the most familiar forms of the vicious circle of poverty: “The poor get sick more than anyone else in the society. That is because they live in slums, jammed together under unhygienic conditions; they have inadequate diets, and

cannot get decent medical care. When they become sick, they are sick longer than any other group in the society. Because they are sick more often and longer than anyone else, they lose wages and work, and find it difficult to hold a steady job. And because of this, they cannot pay for good housing, for a nutritious diet, for doctors. At any given point in the circle, particularly when there is a major illness, their prospect is to move to an even lower level and to begin the cycle, round and round, toward even more suffering.”

The political turbulence created by the 1960s-era social movements and the popular response to Harrington's work have been credited with pressuring President Lyndon Johnson's administration to create the Great Society programs.

Two key Great Society programs dealt with the struggle for access to health care. The 1965 passage of Medicare and Medicaid represents the biggest health care reform won by the working class in U.S. history. These two popular social programs, insufficient as they are, represent a type of concession that can only be won when a mass movement of workers and oppressed stands up and challenges the system.

Medicare and Medicaid were enacted as Title XVIII and Title XIX of the Social Security Act. Medicare extended basic hospital and physician coverage to elderly individuals aged 65 or older. Medicaid addressed the medical care needs of

a fraction of the poor by providing coverage to low-income children and their caretaker relatives.

The Medicare program was opened to the public in 1966. On July 1 of that year the true state of U.S. health care was exposed as 19 million individuals enrolled in the program.

Medicaid eligibility has been confined to certain low-income individuals and families. An applicant's income is just one factor in determining eligibility. The program was not intended to provide medical assistance for all poor people. Even the very poor are ineligible unless they meet criteria for one of the designated eligibility groups. Both programs were modified in 1972 to expand coverage for the blind and disabled.

Medicare and Medicaid, popular despite their overwhelming inadequacy, did not end the struggle for health care reform. Martin Luther King Jr. saw this clearly, stating in his March 25, 1966, speech before the National Convention of the Medical Committee for Human Rights in Chicago that “of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and the most inhumane.”

The struggle for pro-worker health care reform has continued in the spirit of King, just as the cruelty and injustice of inadequate care has continued to the present day.

Next: Cuban socialism builds a model health care system.

Unionists rally for health care reform



More than 3,000 mostly union members marched from different points in New York City and rallied in Times Square on Aug. 29 to support health care reform. The local Democratic Party and some of the unions had called the march. While the organizers supported the Obama administration's program for reform—whatever compromise could be reached—a good section of the marchers insisted on continuing to fight for a single-payer program similar to the Medicare program that ex-

ists for people over 65 years of age. Even some of the politicians speaking, Rep. Jerry Nadler of New York, for example, said that without the “public option”—a government insurance that competes with the private insurance companies—it would not be worth passing a reform bill. The overall political tone of the rally was support for President Barack Obama, for Hillary Rodham Clinton and in remembrance of Ted Kennedy, whose funeral was taking place the same day.

—Report and photo by John Catalinotto

WORKERS WORLD'S TOP TEN

Reasons why the U.S. ruling class doesn't want a health care plan

1. It doesn't like anything with the word "care" in it.

2. If Congress passed a comprehensive health care plan, the people might actually expect comprehensive health care.

3. Rich people already have excellent health care, so, like, what's all the commotion about?

4. Kickbacks to Congress might be politically difficult and even more expensive.

5. Who will get all that money now spent on "administration"?

6. Who would you rather have making medical decisions, some government "bureaucrat" or the bright-eyed and

bushy-tailed executives at Aetna Inc., CIGNA Corp. and WelPoint, Inc.?

7. A single payer plan isn't nearly as good as a 250,000,000-payer plan.

8. Pharmaceuticals may have to settle for making megamillions in profits instead of its customary megabillions.

9. Medical insurance companies will have to find other, more creative ways of bilking the public, like selling real estate securities.

10. The government may increase spending on wasteful and counterproductive things like preventative care. The ruling class prefers "health care" customers.

—Paul Wilcox

Free the Fort Bragg 50

Continued from page 5

manders," Spc. McCormick said, adding that they act as if "you don't deserve to be alive. A sergeant told us he wanted to take us out and shoot us in the back of the head. We get threatened all the time there."

A Fort Bragg spokesperson, Capt. Ronald Thaxton, said, "I can't confirm or deny verbal abuse. It depends on if a person is angry."

Spc. Dustin "Che" Stevens, whose decision to publicize his own resistance led to the exposure of conditions at Fort Bragg, said: "I've been here almost seven months, and only a few people have gotten out during that time. There was a Purple Heart

veteran who was here and is now serving a 15-month jail sentence. ... Unfortunately, our sentence does not take into account the time served here. Some of us get paid, albeit the E1 or entry level wages, but I'd gladly give them the money back if I could go home."

Sgt. Travis Bishop sentenced at Ft. Hood for resisting

Fort Hood, Texas, is another base where there has been a recent surge in resistance. Sgt. Travis Bishop became the second GI in two weeks court martialled there for resistance, and was sentenced on Aug. 13 to 12 months in military prison. A strong sup-

From new intro to ‘High Tech, Low Pay’

Artificial forces of capitalist revival are exhausted

Following is the fifth part of an excerpt from the introduction by Fred Goldstein to an upcoming reprint of the groundbreaking work “High Tech, Low Pay,” written by Sam Marcy in 1986 during the early stages of capitalist restructuring. Goldstein is the author of “Low-Wage Capitalism: Colossus with Feet of Clay.” Read parts one through four in the Aug. 13, Aug. 20, Aug. 27 and Sept. 3 issues, the last referring to various schemes like credit bubbles to stimulate the economy.

In the present crisis, none of these measures is available to restart the system in any significant way.

The two wars now underway in Iraq and Afghanistan are draining the coffers of U.S. imperialism. Overall militarization has largely been accomplished. New rounds of military development are technology intensive, such as laser-guided bombs, satellite-guided missiles, Predator drones, high-tech missile ships and fighter planes. Current imperialist wars are limited and heavily dependent on air power. The hundreds of billions of dollars spent annually on militarism are essential to the system, but, at best, military spending can only help to slow down the economic crisis. It cannot restart the capitalist economy and generate prosperity.

The long period of creating a regime of low-wage capitalism, with a working class in debt and living closer and closer to

the poverty level, has intensified. As this trend deepens it only aggravates the crisis of overproduction by further reducing the buying power of the masses. Driving down wages any more will only intensify the contradictions of the system.

Further use of credit on a major scale is a vanishing option. Credit has been stretched to its limit as a mechanism for reviving capitalist accumulation. The government’s handout of trillions of dollars in financial bailouts to the banks and other financial institutions has stretched the credit option even beyond the limit.

Capitalism has reached a point where, even if the trillions of dollars that the ruling class is spending in an attempt to mitigate the crisis were to result in a revival, it would be weak and short-lived, leaving many millions unemployed as jobs continue to be lost even as capital accumulation expands. Capitalism is entering a period of permanent and deepening crisis for the masses.

In the present crisis the historic methods of reviving the profitability of capitalism, of restoring capitalist accumulation and prosperity, appear to have run their course, as they did leading up to the Great Depression. This is what has the ruling class running scared.

Marx’s proposition about the inevitability of social revolution, already quoted, bears repeating here. It was phrased in

the most general way:

“At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with existing relations of production or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution.”

This is a summary of the broad contours of history. The specifics can only be filled in by analyzing the concrete development of the productive forces of capitalism at each stage.

Sam Marcy in his foreword to this book gave an economic characterization of the period that pointed clearly in the direction of the present profound crisis of capitalism.

“The justification for each new social system as against its predecessor is that it raises society to a higher level. It has done so in each succeeding social order by raising the productivity of labor. The great achievement of capitalism was that it not only promoted a tempestuous development of the productive forces, of science and invention on an unheard of scale, but it raised the productivity of labor. Over a period of centuries it laid the basis for raising the material standards of society and the wage levels of the working class as a whole.

“The distinctive feature of this particular phase of capitalist development, the scientific-technological phase, is that while it enormously raises the productivity of labor, it for the first time simulta-

neously lowers the general wage patterns and demolishes the more high-skilled, high-paid workers. It enhances the general pauperization of the population.”

But Marcy looked beyond the crisis to the future of the struggle. He discussed the changing character of the working class from a revolutionary, optimistic point of view that was firmly rooted in a materialist analysis.

He spoke at that time of the fundamental trend arising out of the objective changes in the capitalist economy: the vast expansion of lower-paid workers and the decline of the higher-paid, which he regarded as one of the most significant and profound developments to emerge in the history of capitalism.

Its significance is ultimately political. It means that the lower-paid workers, the downtrodden and oppressed who can ill afford to be held down by a conservative labor leadership, will ultimately become the predominant voice in the labor movement and provide it with the militant and ultimately revolutionary energy to challenge capital. He showed that this transformation of the working class must ultimately have a political expression.

The consciousness of the workers is forced to catch up to their condition. A delay in this process is inevitable, but overcoming this lag is equally inevitable. Being ultimately determines consciousness. Historical circumstances have delayed this radical development among the workers. But Marcy’s projection of the pauperization of the working class has developed more fully since he wrote.

To be continued.

School bus union stops Boston layoffs

Continued from page 1

found themselves surrounded by 50 militant rank-and-file bus drivers—many of whom faced layoffs due to the sneaky job-cut proposals—who were making placards and preparing materials for the struggle.

The negotiations were intense and lasted several hours. Union militants insisted the session go on until justice was achieved.

In the end, not one driver was laid off. The union won restoration of 22 full-time jobs with full benefits, with other jobs to be added by the October bid. An historic agreement was reached to end outsourcing of athletic and charter work, and an expedited process was put in place to correct unsafe routes that would have required double and triple loads and drivers to be in multiple places at the same time.

port delegation was present at the court martial from Under The Hood, a GI coffee house in nearby Killeen, Texas, as well as Students for a Democratic Society representatives and other supporters who came from Austin, Texas.

Travis based his defense on the failure of the Army to notify soldiers of their right to apply for conscientious objector status. Neither the judge nor the jury of “peers”—all many ranks higher than Sgt. Bishop—paid attention to this argument. But Bishop’s attorney, James Brannum, who is co-chair of the National Lawyers Guild’s Military Law Task Force, said he plans to take the appeal through all military courts and “if necessary, the Supreme Court.” □

While no driver was laid off, there was still a reduction of nine jobs. The union will struggle, once the school year starts, to restore the remaining routes that were cut as a result of overcrowding and speed-up.

School resegregation plan stopped

In June the union in alliance with the Coalition for Equal Quality Education—a broad coalition including the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts, Work 4 Quality/Fight 4 Equity, rank-and-file teachers, parent organizations, the Bail Out the People Movement, other activists and Boston’s councilors-of-color Chuck Turner, Charles Yancy and Sam Yoon—successfully stopped a racist rezoning plan which would have further segregated Boston schools and made the oppressed communities pay for the economic crisis.

That plan would also have resulted in the loss of hundreds of jobs. The superintendent announced on Aug. 26 that this plan, which was originally to have been reworked and resubmitted this fall, has been scrapped and would not be resubmitted. However, she announced plans for a study over the next year of how other urban school systems cut transportation costs. The union and community activists are poised for more rounds in this ongoing fight.

The Boston School Bus Union has shown that the answer to the bosses’ attacks and layoffs is militant, united rank-and-file action and solidarity with the community. The union has vowed that the struggle will go on until all jobs are restored and the racist rezoning plan is stopped for good. An injury to one is an injury to all! □

Major labor unions back jobs march in Pittsburgh

Continued from page 1

Building actions throughout country

Outside of Pittsburgh, activists are organizing to bring caravans of unemployed and their supporters to the week of action. A big push is being made at Labor Day events throughout the country to win the support of more unions.

Many activists vowed their support at a labor meeting in New York on Aug. 31, which featured workers from the Stella D’Oro factory in the Bronx; the president of the Vulcan Society, Black firefighters who just won a discrimination lawsuit against New York City; the vice president of Service Employees Local 1199; a co-chair of the May 1st Coalition for Worker

and Immigrant Rights; among others.

A speaking tour of Ohio is gathering momentum for the events, and an organizing meeting will take place in North Carolina involving Black Workers For Justice, the youth group FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together), UE Local 150 and other community and labor forces.

Resolutions supporting the March for Jobs and Global Week in Solidarity with the Unemployed have been adopted by the San Francisco Labor Council, the International Longshore Warehouse Union Local 10 executive board and Golden Gate Branch 214 of the Letter Carriers union. (See WW, Aug. 23.)

For more information, visit www.bailoutpeople.org. □

High Tech, Low Pay

World View Forum is reissuing this classic work by Sam Marcy, Workers World Party founder, on the party’s 50th anniversary.

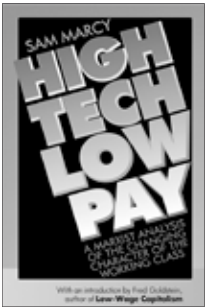
The book rings as true today as when it was first published in 1986. Marcy explained how the high-tech revolution was destroying high-paying jobs while changing the social composition of the working class, bringing more of the oppressed into workplaces, raising the potential for more solidarity and struggle.

Marcy’s analysis, strategies and tactics are still on-target. A new introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of “Low-Wage Capitalism,” explains how world developments have heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

Funds are needed to republish this vital book. While the writing, editing, proofreading, and design are all done by voluntary labor, the printing, binding and promotional costs are high. Help to get this book to working people, activists and readers nationwide.

Send donations to World View Forum, 55 West 17th Street, 5th Floor, N Y , NY 10011

Look for High Tech, Low Pay at leftbooks.com in October





Stop the war on Afghanistan

The hint is becoming loud and clear in the official media of the U.S. ruling class: The Pentagon is on the verge of a massive escalation of the war in what they now call the “Af/Pak theater.” An Aug. 31 attack on a NATO arms convoy in Pakistan near the Afghan border that blew up 18 trucks served to underscore the drama of this decision.

The Washington Post, New York Times and television talk shows report that Gen. Stanley McChrystal, U.S. commander in Afghanistan, is about to report to the Obama administration that without a substantial increase of U.S. resources—including commitment of its youth in uniform—the occupation will fail.

An Aug. 31 Washington Post article interviewed six “experts,” only one of whom came out clearly for the U.S. getting out. His reasoning: He believed even a big escalation would lead to a crushing setback, which would not be good for U.S. stability.

For the world’s workers—including the entire U.S. working class—and for Afghanistan’s people, there is no reason to consider what’s good or bad for the long-term interests of U.S. imperialism. That’s what the strategists paid by the U.S. ruling class focus on, and anyone can read that in the Washington Post

and elsewhere. The important issue for everyone else is how a decision to escalate the war hurts workers here and all the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

For South and Central Asia it means more death, more turmoil, more refugees, more disruption. No good can come of that.

For U.S. workers, for the African-American community, for immigrants and all oppressed peoples, and for all young people here, an escalation confronts them with the unpalatable choices faced by the population during the U.S. war against Vietnam. Do I die? Do I kill? And for what?

The Obama administration has identified the war in Afghanistan as vital to U.S. interests. But it is vital only to the interest of U.S. imperialism to militarily dominate Central Asia and not to the interest of any workers and unemployed here, who are having a hard enough time these days just getting by. Every poll shows the public more disenchanted and disapproving of the Afghanistan adventure, with those who voted for Barack Obama most against the war.

There is no doubt that all progressive people here who fought against the Iraq war must redouble their efforts to stop any escalation in the “Af-Pak” region and get the Pentagon out of Asia. □

After 18-day factory occupation

English workers keep up fight to save ‘green’ jobs

By Martha Grevatt

“They’d made an announcement ... that we were going to have our jobs for years to come. So people went out and got mortgages and cars and all that. ... Then they came and said it’s not happening. They turned around and said, ‘Actually, we’re sacking you all.’ It was a big shock.” (www.savevestas.wordpress.com)

These could be the voices of autoworkers in Detroit, St. Louis or even at this writer’s plant in Twinsburg, Ohio. They could have been working in steel or any other “dying industry”—one so-defined by those who are killing the jobs of workers considered expendable.

Instead, these are the words of Mike and Tracey, who worked in the branch of manufacturing deemed key to revitalizing the capitalist economy. Their jobs were the so-called “green jobs”—the jobs laid-off autoworkers are told they should get training for if they want to make it in a changing economy. On Aug. 12 the Danish wind turbine manufacturer Vestas made Mike, Tracey and 600 other workers “redundant” when it ceased operations at a plant on the Isle of Wight in Britain. (Redundancies is the English term for layoffs.)

Vestas’ official excuse for closing existing plants is that the wind-turbine blades currently produced there are not designed for turbines used in Britain. That raises the obvious question, why not re-tool? Vestas, which has profited from the labor of European workers, is now moving manufacturing to the U.S., where the company anticipates bigger markets and stimulus grants from the government—in other words, a larger profit margin.

There is no reason for workers here to expect lifetime employment either, should they get jobs with “green” businesses like Vestas. Down the road, if government subsidies run out, these companies could easily shut down again and decide to set up shop where wages are lower. Under capitalism, no job is safe—nor is the world’s fragile environment.

Fight for jobs unites workers, environmentalists

Vestas workers have made it clear that the company’s attitude toward them is unacceptable. The redundancies came after an 18-day occupation of the plant that drew worldwide attention.

Originally, about 50 workers were in on the plan to occupy, developed over several weeks of meetings. “On Tuesday [July 21] morning we were going to take the factory. We were going to go into work, and then hand out the leaflets saying, ‘We are occupying this factory.’ We thought it’d be that simple, according to Mike. When two snitches went to management, however, we had an emergency meeting as soon as we finished work. We said it’s not going to happen tomorrow, it’s got to happen today. ... By chance, one of the managers rode past on his bike with his wife and kid. He saw us with the ropes, chains and sleeping bags and camping gear. We wanted to hold on to see if others were coming, but we knew that management had heard about our occupation plans, so we had to go there and then.”

There were only 17 workers inside, but they had mass support on the outside from their coworkers and neighbors in the town of Newport. A second group of workers occupied the roof of another

Young Lords Party honored on 40th anniversary



Standing-room-only crowd cheers accomplishments of Young Lords. PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

Several hundred people packed an East Harlem church on Aug. 22 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Young Lords Party.

Following the example of, and with the solidarity of the Black Panther Party, the YLP was founded in New York in 1969 by Puerto Rican people. It fought against the racism, poverty, imperialism and capitalism that the youth had become politicized against.

YLP members each gave a brief account of their part in the struggle, from providing breakfast programs to political education and Puerto Rican history as well as leading the movement for Puerto

Rican independence and socialism. The YLP occupied a hospital to provide health services, all the while defending against racist police. The standing-room-only, multinational, multigenerational crowd applauded and gave standing ovations to the many examples of the YLP’s revolutionary work. Youth were urged to follow the YLP legacy.

The powerful, moving event was held at the First Spanish Methodist Church—the Peoples’ Church, which was taken over by the Lords in one of their first actions. A solidarity message was read from Ricardo Alarcon, president of Cuba’s National Assembly.

—Bill Cecil

Vestas plant—now also closed—in nearby Cowes. Over a dozen solidarity actions were held around Britain. The folk band Seize the Day composed a song, “Boys on the Balcony,” especially for the sit-downs and performed it outside the plant.

When Vestas finally obtained a court eviction order, the last six workers still inside emerged. Three made dramatic exits—two scaled down the walls, one jumped off the balcony. Finally the last three walked out. All six were received by cheering crowds.

The struggle to force Vestas to cancel the redundancies is by no means over. Solidarity groups have formed all over Britain. They held coordinated actions on Aug. 12 and have declared Sept. 17 a second “national day of action.” On Aug. 29 environmental activists joined trade unionists in leafleting a rugby tournament at Wembley Stadium in London, demanding the Warrington Wolves dump Vestas as a team sponsor.

The Isle of Wight Council and the Isle’s Member of Parliament Andrew Turner have urged the South East England Development Agency to “apply stringent conditions to Vestas ... to ensure that a

brand new Vestas facility, to be supported with substantial public money, provides long-term benefits to the local economy.” While Vestas is shuttering manufacturing facilities on the Isle, the company is in line for a six-million-pound government grant to open a research and development center there.

The fight against the Vestas plant closings has united the labor and environmental movements. “Climate Camps”—held in England, Scotland and Wales to demand action to reverse global warming—have demonstrated their support for Vestas workers and for continued production of wind turbines in Britain.

As of Aug. 29 supporters are traveling to Newport from all over, answering a call for help from the Vestas occupiers. “At the moment we are trying to stop Vestas getting blades out,” occupier Mark Smith told a London meeting. “They are shipping out blades from Southampton to the U.S. We think they want to get the nine blades in St. Cross [Newport factory] out. Direct action will be needed.”

To support the Vestas workers, visit www.savevestas.wordpress.com.

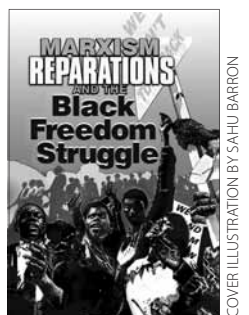
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MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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In cities across the U.S.

Protests denounce Honduras coup

By Kris Hamel

Demonstrators marched in solidarity with the Honduran people in at least 10 U.S. cities on Aug. 28, the two-month anniversary of the June 28 military coup d'état in Honduras which ousted President Manuel Zelaya. The right-wing coup replaced the legally and constitutionally elected Zelaya with Roberto Micheletti, representing the 13-family ruling oligarchy.

Since June 28, the Honduran people have been organizing and resisting in the streets nearly every day, earning the name "los incansables"—the tireless ones—because they have been mobilizing nonstop against the coup.

Both Amnesty International and the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights have documented widespread police and military abuses directed at anyone who supports the Honduran Constitution or who calls for the return of President Zelaya.

Despite this criminal and unjust attack of a democratically-elected president, an act that has been condemned by virtually every Latin American government, there is hardly a word of protest from the U.S. government. The Obama administration has made contradictory statements about the coup and has said nothing about the daily repression that has intensified since June 28.

In early August the International Action Center, based in New York City, issued a call for demonstrations around the U.S. on Aug. 28 to protest the military coup and support the Honduran people's resistance.

In Mexico City, from Aug. 20 to 24, the Sao Paulo Forum, a discussion group of 520 delegates from 32 countries, representing 62 leftist parties and movements in Latin America and observers from other parts of the world, made solidarity with the Honduran resistance a central point on its agenda.

The National Front against the Coup d'état in Honduras—which unites all anti-coup forces—then made a call to all progressive organizations to protest on Aug. 28 at U.S. embassies around the world against the dictatorship that restored the Honduran oligarchy in complicity with its international backers.

Following are reports from some of the Aug. 28 protests in the U.S.

Virtually every progressive Latin American organization in the **New York** metropolitan area plus North American anti-imperialist organizations filled the sidewalk at 42nd Street and Seventh Avenue for an evening rush-hour rally before marching to the Honduran Consulate on the East Side. Hundreds of people chanted loudly in Spanish and English in response to the talks at the rally and during the entire march to the Honduran Mission to the United Nations.

Hondurans living in the U.S. addressed the rally, as did anti-war activists, union members, Hurricane Katrina survivors and representatives of progressive movements in many of the countries of Latin America. Teresa Gutierrez of the May 1 Coalition chaired the rally.

In **Union City, N.J.**, activists from the Jersey City Peace Movement, the International Action Center, Action 21 and Veterans For Peace distributed informational flyers about the struggle in Honduras in this mostly Spanish-speaking community.

A small but spirited group gathered



Houston

WW PHOTOS: GLORIA RUBAC



outside the federal building in downtown **Tucson** in support of the Honduran resistance and to demand an end to the illegal Micheletti regime and the return of Manuel Zelaya to the presidency of Honduras. Banners demanding an end to all U.S. political, economic and military aid to Honduras and no U.S. military bases in Latin America were greeted with honks and waves of support by passing motorists.

A strong picket and speak-out was held in Government Center near the JFK Federal Building in **Boston**. Activists from the Committee in Solidarity with the Resistance in Honduras and the International Action Center held signs, handed out flyers and addressed the rush-hour flow of workers, explaining and condemning the U.S. role in and support for the right-wing coup in Honduras. A contingent of Honduran activists held the Honduran flag. The speak-out was kicked off by Sergio Reyes of the Committee in Solidarity with the Resistance in Honduras, who explained the coup, the U.S. role and the need for people in the U.S. to support the resistance. Isabel López spoke from the Honduran Project and thanked activists for coming out to support human rights in her country. She called for continued actions until President Zelaya is returned to power.

Bob Traynham spoke from the Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751, and called for international workers' unity and solidarity. Ed Childs, chief steward of UNITE-HERE Local 26 at Harvard University, described how in the midst of the economic crisis the money being spent on a right-wing coup to deny workers housing, food and health care in Honduras is needed to provide those things for workers here. Speakers from the IAC condemned the long history of U.S. intervention in Latin America since the time of the Monroe Doctrine and highlighted the criminal role of the School of the Americas.

Local activists demonstrated in the rain outside the federal building in **Cleveland** to show their solidarity with the Honduran people. The protest was co-sponsored



NEW YORK

WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO



Left, Isabel Lopez of the Honduran Project speaks at Boston rally.

Below, Phebe Eckfeldt of the Women's Fightback Network, next to Honduran contingent holding Honduran flag at Boston protest.

WW PHOTOS: LIZ GREEN

by the Peoples Fightback Center and the Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America.

Despite a driving rain, activists in downtown **Detroit** demanded "Money for Detroit, not the coup in Honduras!" Protesters denounced the U.S.-backed military coup in Honduras and supported the resistance movement there. Banners and signs also called for no U.S. military intervention against Iran, Pakistan, Latin America and globally, and an end to U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

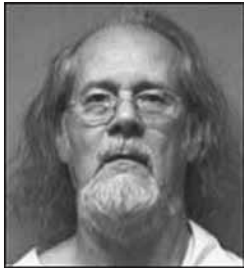
Some 40 activists, mostly youth, from a number of anti-war and student organizations held a leafleting barrage and short rally in downtown **Atlanta** in support of the Honduran people's resistance to the military coup. Hundreds of informational flyers were distributed to pedestrians, urging them to contact the White House, the State Department and other elected officials and demand the Obama administration take immediate action to end U.S. financial and military support to the illegal government and to support the restoration of President Zelaya. The newly formed Atlanta Honduras Coalition is planning further educational activities. For more information, e-mail hondurascoalition@gmail.com.



A lively and militant demonstration at the federal building in downtown **Houston** took place during rush hour traffic. Despite harassment by a squad of Houston cops, dozens of activists carried signs and chanted support for the people's resistance in Honduras and an end to the coup. Speakers took to the open mic from the Harris County Green Party, University of Houston Students Against Sweatshops, UH Students for Fair Trade, Mexicanos en Acción and Justice for Palestinians.

Demonstrations also took place in San Francisco; San Jose, Calif.; Phoenix; and other U.S. cities.

John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt, Michael Kramer, Dianne Mathiowetz, Frank Neisser, Gloria Rubac and Paul Teitelbaum contributed to this article.



Carlos Alberto Torres y Avelino González Claudio

Artículo por Cándida Cotto tomado del periódico Claridad de Puerto Rico www.claridadpuertorico.com

Los prisioneros políticos puertorriqueños Carlos Alberto Torres y Avelino González Claudio son blancos una vez más de las arbitrariedades del Gobierno de Estados Unidos.

En una acción que no tiene otro propósito que evitar su salida de prisión el pasado mes de junio las autoridades volvieron a plantar fisgas en la celda donde se encuentra Carlos Alberto Torres, en la prisión federal Pekín, en Illinois. Es la segunda ocasión en que la oficialidad de la prisión comete este acto contra Torres.

El pasado mes de enero de este año, Torres, quien ya lleva 29 años en prisión, tenía derecho a una vista ante el Buró Federal de Libertad Bajo Palabra (BFLP). A una semana de que se celebrara la vista, de manera sorpresiva los oficiales de la prisión dijeron encontrar varias fisgas en la celda que Torres comparte con otros nueve reclusos. A raíz de esta acusación la vista ante el BFLP tuvo que ser pospuesta hasta que se diera un proceso administrativo en la prisión. Pese a que uno de los presos se hizo responsable por las armas, las autoridades del penal declararon culpables a los 10 ocupantes de la celda. La representación legal de Carlos Alberto apeló esta decisión y logró que le retiraran el cargo.

En mayo se celebró la vista ante el BFLP. El oficial examinador recomendó otorgar libertad bajo palabra a Carlos Alberto en abril del 2010, fecha en que cumple exactamente 30 años de prisión.

Tras la recomendación el Buró se suponía que comunicara su decisión final en 21 días. Estando bajo la expectativa de la decisión del Buró, en las primeras semanas de junio el Negociado de Prisiones (NP) volvió a tenderle la misma trampa al luchador independentista puertorriqueño. Este 28 de julio el Buró le informó que habían aplazado su decisión por 90 días, pendientes de la resolución de los nuevos cargos radicados.

En reacción a lo ocurrido Jan Susler, asesora legal del prisionero político puertorriqueño, denunció: “Es obvio que hay alguien en el poder que no quiere que Carlos Alberto salga y están usando una manera sucia e injusta. Vamos a seguir peleando hasta que esté fuera”. Indicó que se proponen impugnar lo sucedido una vez más, según el proceso administrativo, y agregó que como ocurrió en la primera ocasión la misma persona admitió que actuó solo y asumió la responsabilidad por las armas y otra vez el NP atribuyó cargos a todos los presos.

Susler prosiguió que de ser encontrado culpable Torres, la situación es una muy adversa para la decisión del BFLP. De haberse dado el proceso sin incidentes y el Buró aceptado la recomendación del oficial examinador, se suponía que en octubre próximo Carlos Alberto fuera trasladado a una casa de transición.

Denunció además de que aunque a Torres no lo han puesto en segregación y no le han dado por escrito la resolución de los cargos, ya le suspendieron por 60 días poder hacer y recibir llamadas telefónicas, visitas familiares y el acceso a la comisaría. Más aun, perdió 40 días de crédito de tiempo en prisión. El adelanto de los

castigos tiene el efecto de que si se gana el proceso administrativo de todas maneras ya habrá cumplido los castigos, censuró.

Niegan atención médica a Avelino

Por otro lado, al prisionero político Avelino González Claudio, quien se encuentra en la prisión MacDougall – Walker, en Suffield, Conneticut, se le está negando atención médica.

Hilton Fernández Diamante, portavoz del Comité de Amigos (CAAGC) contó a Claridad que meses después de ser ingresado a prisión en febrero de 2008, González Claudio comenzó a padecer de alta presión y de temblores en sus extremidades. A reclamos de los familiares y su defensa, el Negociado de Prisiones le hizo las pruebas médicas rutinarias pero se niega a que éste sea examinado por un neurólogo. Fernández Diamante dijo que los síntomas se han incrementado por lo que temen que el compañero pueda estar desarrollando una condición grave como el mal de Parkinson y es evidente que no está recibiendo la atención médica requerida. Señaló que incluso se le ha comunicado a la prisión que están dispuestos a asumir los costos médicos de ser necesario.

Por su parte, el portavoz del Comité Pro Derechos Humanos de Puerto Rico (CPDH), licenciado Eduardo Villanueva denunció que las situaciones en que se encuentran los dos Prisioneros Políticos Puertorriqueños constituyen una violación a sus derechos humanos. En el caso de González Claudio reveló que las autoridades de la prisión se niegan a darle los servicios médicos porque alegan que “lo han visto hacer ejercicios”.

Sobre el caso de Carlos Alberto, al cen-

surar la conducta del NP, Villanueva enfatizó que “nadie en su sano juicio puede pensar que un recluso que está a punto de salir con vista de libertad bajo palabra de alguna manera va a conspirar para tener una fisga en su celda. Han hecho ese operativo fatulo para mantenerlo preso. Estados Unidos, que le pide a otros países del mundo que excarcele a presos políticos, no sabe hacer justicia en su propio patio”.

En vista de que el presidente Obama nombró como secretario de Justicia a Eric Holder, quien fue la persona que le recomendó en el 1999 al entonces presidente Bill Clinton, la excarcelación de los once Prisioneros Políticos Puertorriqueños y ahora parece mostrar una postura diferente, el licenciado Villanueva comentó que en el proceso de confirmación de Holder los Republicanos levantaron precisamente ese elemento en su contra, lo que parece haber creado en éste un “efecto de congelamiento”.

“Obama tiene la facultad constitucional del perdón ejecutivo pero aparentemente también se ha congelado y está actuando de manera conservadora. Prefiere asumir el costo político de la brecha de credibilidad que abre esa actuación discriminatoria contra estos puertorriqueños”, manifestó Villanueva.

El portavoz del CPDH exhortó a que “ahora es más importante que nunca retomar las acciones de presión tanto en Puerto Rico, en Estados Unidos y a nivel internacional, en todos los foros posibles para que Obama sepa que estos puertorriqueños tienen el apoyo y respaldo de un pueblo, comunidad internacional y de los organismos que velan por los derechos humanos del mundo”, expresó.

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LA INJUSTICIA CONTINÚA: Le niegan libertad condicional a Leonard Peltier

Declaraciones del abogado de Peltier

A continuación publicamos extractos de las declaraciones presentadas el 21 de agosto por Eric Seitz, abogado defensor de Peltier:

A pesar de las determinaciones judiciales de que el FBI fabricó evidencias y presentó testimonios falsos en el juicio de Leonard Peltier; a pesar de la absolución por el jurado de dos acusados por haber actuado en defensa propia y que fueron encontrados de haber tenido la misma conducta de la cual el Sr. Peltier es acusado; a pesar del récord ejemplar del Sr. Peltier durante su encarcelamiento por más de 33 años y su claramente demostrada elegibilidad para la libertad condicional; a pesar de las cartas y peticiones pidiendo su libertad enviadas por millones de personas en este país y en todo el mundo incluyendo a uno de los jueces quien presidió en sus apelaciones anteriores; y a pesar de su edad avanzada y su salud en

deterioro, la Comisión Para la Libertad Condicional hoy informó al Sr. Peltier que su libertad condicional reduciría la seriedad de sus ofensas y promocionaría el irrespeto por la ley” y programó una audiencia de reconsideración para julio del año 2024.

Esta es la acción extrema de la misma comunidad policial que nos ha dado el encarcelamiento indefinido de jóvenes sospechosos de terrorismo; torturas y asesinatos en las prisiones de la CIA en todo el mundo. ...Estas son las mismas instituciones que nunca han tratado a los pueblos indígenas con dignidad ni respeto y que nunca han aceptado responsabilidad por siglos de intolerancia y abuso.

En la audiencia del 28 de julio, Leonard Peltier expresó arrepentimiento y aceptó responsabilidad por su papel en el incidente en el cual dos agentes del FBI y un activista indígena murieron como resultado de una balacera en la Reservación de

Pine Ridge. El Sr. Peltier enfatizó que la balacera ocurrió en circunstancias donde literalmente se llevaba a cabo una guerra entre los líderes corruptos de la tribu apoyados por el gobierno por un lado, y por el otro, con indígenas tradicionalistas y activistas jóvenes.

El de nuevo negó, como siempre lo ha hecho, haber tenido intención de matar a nadie o haber hecho los disparos fatales que mataron a los dos agentes. Además, hizo recordar al oficial de la audiencia que uno de los acusados recientemente admitió haber hecho los disparos fatales.

Por lo tanto no es verdad que Leonard Peltier participó en el asesinato “estilo ejecución de los dos agentes de la FBI” como afirma la Comisión, y nunca ha habido una evidencia creíble de la responsabilidad del Sr. Peltier por los disparos fatales, como continúa afirmando la FBI.

Además, dadas las prácticas corruptas del FBI, ...es totalmente incierto que la



libertad condicional de Leonard Peltier a esta coyuntura de ninguna manera “depreciaría la seriedad” de su conducta o “promovería el irrespeto de la ley”.

Nosotros continuaremos buscando la libertad condicional y una clemencia para el Sr. Peltier para eventualmente llevar a esta prolongada injusticia a una ...justa resolución.

El Comité de Defensa/Ofensa de Leonard Peltier está actualmente en el proceso de finalizar planes para desafiar esta decisión, abogando por una intervención por el Presidente Barack Obama y lograr tanto una atención médica propia para Leonard y la transferencia a una prisión federal cerca de a su casa.

Para más información sobre el caso de Peltier y la lucha para liberarlo, visite a WWW.whoisleonardpeltier.info. Correspondencia puede ser enviada a Leonard Peltier, #89637-132, USP-Lewisburg, P.O. Box 1000, Lewisburg, PA 17837. □